

notes on absence

things a father is

a father is a puzzle mother bought
to keep me busy,

it's a locked old door, key
thrown away into the sink,

it's the prayer God forgot to write,
and i remember in the darkness,

he's the short men i date,
the tall man i hate when i look at the mirror,

you look just like your—
father is my mother, left alone

in the kitchen at dawn, making
tuna for his workday. it's ice

burning children's hands,
it's a cold gun, cardboard,

and rolling papers. it's that cold i caught
for weeks, then vanished,

leaving behind a dry cough, and
an empty box of ibuprofen.

a father is the question: *is it gay to love your son?*
it's the taste of his response

that a father doesn't know
how to love.

coffee machine

behind the counter,
the coffee machine
lies awake. it waits

for your callous hands
to touch its marble,
and make magic out of beans.

it craves your fingers,
the softness of your voice
saying it did not matter,

the hues of the sky
nor the beans we picked
to build a house,

the grounds, dried pebbles
in a mason jar, murmur
the words you won't

and gape, from the dirty
counter, the things you left
on the floor.

wiese

lies upon soft grass and thirteen roses that smile blue
the scent of your heart dressed in vermouth wool
the pacing of your eyes and the sighing of your lips
the fact time holds me slow at the behest of your hips

the feeling when you breathe on my nape clouds of prune
your quartered ribbon vest whispering me snowflakes in june
your rare metal earth that meet me halfway in my sky
and every chrystal time that you chose not to die

are but the favourite things i will hold against mine skin
as your absence undresses me.

until all land is ravished

until all land is ravished, invite me in.
brave into mine branches

stern, sweet, more potent
than oakwood on the back of my palm,

yours make mine roots shake, make
them shiver all spring, make

my name a summer's rite
a sin sowed softly under my tongue,

bend, bust, and burn
the kindling i tease you with,

like a wildfire, consume me
wash down all fire with thrust

until your trunk is thick
and mine is broken

charcoal on the ground.

note on two roads in a yellow wood

their sadness consumed me
and turned these legs into roots.

onto the forest skin, my body
blossomed in moss, and I

a lone traveller lost, mind made
of falling leaves, closed my eyes

to dream a choice. feeling how
the underbent caved,

i knew whatever path i took
it'd make no difference,

then looking as far down as i could,
i imagined a bend where the roads yearned green,

like me, wishing to be less beaten.
instead, i saw nothing but darkness

and still i charged.